

Saturday 22nd September 1979
to STEPHEN DONALDSON, FRITZ LEIBER, KARL EDWARD WAGNER

Here we go again, colleagues. The World Fantasy Convention people want us to pretend to be a heroic fantasy/sword & sorcery panel on Saturday afternoon the 13th, with me pretending to moderate. Moderately.

I reckon we can handle that.

It would be nice to do something a bit different. Despite what Terry Carr professes to believe, hf is an astonishingly broad field and not one of us four writes "mindless barbarian stuff". It would be pleasant to hold a hf panel with a more specific theme to prove we can: some indication of the background we bring to our works. (Or that brings--or drives--us to them.) Say:

A What we read, aside from fiction.

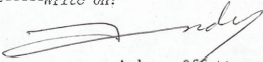
Suppose we each jot a list of six or ten or a dozen nonfiction books we've read this year, and carry it to Providence. I just did, and it surprised me.* (Interesting if we have no, or extremely few duplications.)

B How we incorporate special personal interests or occupational background into our characters/subject matter/plots.

My childhood was miserable and most un-free. Feeling alone, I coped. Now I've written repeatedly of copers who rebel, overthrow, prevail. That plus my deep interest in aberrant psychology have led me to my newest continuing character: miserable Jarik the Outsider of the unhappy childhood, who grows up --physically, at least--to be a dissociative personality. I've read an interview with you, Steve, of how you came to write of a leper-rapist --but we can bet not all of our audience read that, and will be interested. Karl, of course, has never worked through the guilt of his childhood murder of his brother Abel.

That's an idea for an hour's worth of panel with us four. If you don't like it, let me know fast! (Fritz, Steve and Karl could always give a demonstration of combat.)

Stay well, and please be careful, and-----Write On!



Andrew Offutt

* Every word of every issue of Omni and Newsweek, with yellow hi-liter; Sagan's Broca's Brain; Joan Oates's new Babylon; Wm. S. Paley's memoirs; Vernon Jacobs's Taxpayers' Counterattack (important personal research!); 73 encyclopedic articles; Richard Valeriani's Travels With Henry (Kissinger); Christopher Lasch's The Culture of Narcissism; Peter Schrag's Mind Control; and PARTS OF A Complete Guide to Heraldry; Barbara Tuchman's A Distant Mirror; Le Roy Ladurie's Montaillu; J.G. Landfels's Engineering in the Ancient World; Otto Maenchen-Helfen's The World of the Huns; Asimov's Guide to Science; The Living Earth Vol II: Forest Life; Every Living Thing Vol I: The Living Earth; ... and lots of articles about our Age of Reptiles for the next project. ... and who knows how much sf and mind-rotting heroic fantasy!

